

Guidelines for electric service in flood damaged structures

The Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code (UCC) exempts alterations and renovations for residential one- and two-family dwellings as long as the work is not structural or changing the Means of Egress. A change to the Means of Egress would be re-configuring the layout of a house in any way or replacing stairs or door widths. So, you can basically gut your house down to bare studs and put everything back without a UCC Building Permit. This exemption does not apply to three or more family structures or any commercial structure.

Since electrical work in a one- or two-family dwelling is exempt from the code it will not have to be inspected under the UCC, however an electric service will need to be inspected for the electrical company requirements before they will energize it. Their regulations require the work to comply with their own requirements and the National Electric Code (NEC) and are only concerned about the equipment from their point of attachment to the main breaker. Even though all the branch circuit breakers are not part of the service inspection, it is recommended by the manufactures that they and their wiring be replaced.

Unfortunately, if your main braker was submerged, it must be replaced before your electric can be re-energized. Your panel box must be cleaned and washed of all material from the flood waters before installing a new breaker and cannot be altered in any way. If a new breaker cannot be found at a store, you will have to install a new panel box. If a new panel box is installed and you are in a flood zone, your new panel box must be installed above the flood level, even if it is on a different floor of the house. If a new panel box is installed, the grounding must be brought up to code. This means 2- 8' ground rods 6' or more apart and also grounded to your water supply main pipe if it is metallic and the copper wire ran back to the main panel box. If the meter box was submerged, it must also be cleaned and washed before being re-energized. If the cable from the meter box to the electric panel box was submerged, it must also be replaced unless the lettering on the wire has a "W" designation. (Example – THWN, RHW)

It is also important to note that you must contact your electric company for a work order number to give to the inspector before it can be re-energized.

Steps to get your electric service re-energized -

Please check and double check that ALL power is disconnected before any work!!!

*Call electric company and get a work order number.

*Thoroughly clean meter hub and main panel box if they were submerged.

*Replace any service cables that have been submerged in flood waters.

*Install new main breaker, must be identical to old one or UL listed for that panel box.

*Install new main panel and grounding system if main breaker cannot be found.

*Call electrical inspector to schedule an inspection: 570-827-3474